


1894

# Walking By Faith: Origin of Instrumental Music in Christian Worship

M. C. Kurfees

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## Recommended Citation

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V.F. Kurfees, M.C.

CENTER FOR RESTORATION STUDIES  
ANDREWS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

**WALKING BY FAITH:**

**Origin of Instrumental Music**

—IN—

**Christian Worship.**

—BY—

**M. C. KURFEES.**

**SECOND EDITION.**

LOUISVILLE, KY.:  
F. A. CRUMP PRINTING CO.

1894.

## Preface to the Second Edition.

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The demand for this tract has greatly exceeded my expectation. The first edition, which appeared a little more than a month ago, is exhausted, and the second edition is published to meet the demand. The enthusiasm with which it is received in various sections of the country shows that the sentiment against departure from the worship authorized in the New Testament, is strong and general; and as to the logical merits of the argument here submitted, a prominent Episcopalian Bishop writes: "If the premises you lay down are true, your conclusion is irresistible." It is my decided conviction that the premises are true, and thus far no attempt has been made to show to the contrary.

I must here express my gratitude for the numerous kindly notices of it both by the press and by individuals, some of which are printed on the cover with this edition. Such generous testimonials against false worship and in favor of the true, are encouraging to those who, like Hezekiah of old, desire to worship God "as it is written."

M. C. KURFEES.

Louisville, Ky., February, 1895.

## Walking by Faith: Origin of Instrumental Music in Christian Worship.

### TESTIMONIALS.

**John F. Rowe**, Cincinnati, O.—“I regard it as unanswerable. We need such a tract to be placed with our standard literature.”

**President Robert Graham**, Lexington, Ky.—“I am free to say that it is, in my opinion, the best argument of its length that has appeared in opposition to instrumental music in our congregations.”

**Professor I. B. Grubbs**, Lexington, Ky.—“You ask me to express my estimate of its logical merits. This may be done in one word as to the unscriptural and consequent improper use of instrumental music in worship. *Unanswerable.*”

**Professor J. W. McGarvey**, Lexington, Ky.—“I pronounce it very good. It furnishes a few facts which I have not seen before. The misfortune is that the people will not listen to Scripture or reason on the subject.”

**Dr. E. W. Herndon**, Austin, Tex.—“I do not think that it could be put plainer or more conclusively.”

**Professor J. E. Scobey**, Franklin, Tenn.—“You could hardly have made it clearer, and have left, it seems to me, the honest intelligent reader without excuse.”

**E. A. Elam**, Gallatin, Tenn.—“It is well written, close, clear, logical, and convincing; in many respects, is the best tract on the subject discussed that has come under my observation.”

**J. W. McGarvey, Jr.**, Columbia, Ky.—“It is fine. I am glad you pay particular attention to ‘objections’ commonly urged.”

**F. W. Smith**, Franklin, Tenn.—“It is the best thing on the subject I have seen.”

**G. G. Taylor**, Louisville, Ky.—“A masterly use of Scripture and reason. It is clear, direct, scriptural, and logical, so that any one who has any respect for these elements can not fail to be benefited by a careful reading of it.”

**O. A. Carr**, Sherman, Tex.—“I am satisfied of the correctness of your position, and you present the argument in good spirit.”

**V. M. Metcalfe**, Hopkinsville, Ky.—“The best I have ever read. You certainly are striking hard blows at the very tap-root of all departure from the Word of God.”

**J. W. Jackson**, Austin, Tex.—“We need just such literature sowed broadcast among the churches.”

**Dr. J. D. Morgan**, Odin, Ill.—“The best thing that I have seen on the subject. It is par excellent.”

**W. L. Butler**, Harmony, N. C.—“It is certainly a strong, clear docu-

TESTIMONIALS.—CONTINUED.

ment. It will be approved by all who are strongly set for the truth of the Gospel and oppose the inventions of the Pope."

**J. N. Sands**, Trimble, O.—"I pronounce it good. It exactly fills a long felt want."

**H. C. Jackson**, Charlestown, Ind.—"The ablest document I have seen on the subject of this grievous innovation."

**E. Snodgrass**, Lexington, Ky.—"It is the most scriptural presentation I have ever seen of divine authority in church worship. It completely overthrows the arguments of the apologists for instrumental music. I would love to see your discourses, which are written in so Christian a spirit, in the hands of thousands of the brethren who are drifting with the tide of popular religious apostasy."

**J. Perry Elliott**, Indianapolis, Ind.—"I have read it with interest and care, and my impression is that any one who thus reads it will be compelled to say that it is a candid, calm, clear and conclusive argument against the use of instruments in the worship in the church of Christ, and I have no idea that any advocate of this Romish device will ever undertake to refute it. I wish this worthy tract a wide circulation."

"The author is calm, candid, and deliberate in his treatment of this vexatious subject. His Scriptural arguments are as logical as they are forcible, and his conclusions are irresistible. . . . He not only rules out instrumental music in worship by the Word of God, but he annihilates all the pitiful excuses for the introduction of the organ. This tract should be widely read, as we feel certain that he who honestly and calmly peruses this timely little work will never again try to sustain an innovation that has divided so many churches."—*Christian Leader*, Cincinnati, Ohio.

"It shows clearly where and when instrumental music was introduced and furnishes the reader with clear, strong Scriptural arguments against this and all other innovations. We commend this tract to our readers and will gladly assist in giving it a wide circulation."—*Firm Foundation*, Austin, Texas.

"It presents what it is to walk by faith—what not. In connection with this it discusses the use of instrumental music in the worship and gives the history of its introduction into the worship. He shows the order of God in worship and how God has made that order permanent and unchangeable. It is a good tract for circulation, conveying clear scriptural teaching on several points on which instruction is much needed."—*Gospel Advocate*, Nashville, Tenn.

"It is sufficient within itself to forever settle the question in regard to whether we should use instrumental music in connection with the worship of Almighty God."—*The Gospel Echo*, Palatine, West Va.

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This Tract can be ordered as follows: Single copy, 5 cents; one dozen copies, 35 cents; fifty copies or more, 2 cents each. Address all orders to M. C. KURFEES, 810 Washington Street, Louisville, Ky.

**Walking by Faith:**

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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The publication of these discourses in tract-form is in response to urgent requests from many who heard them preached to the Campbell Street church, Louisville, Ky., November 18th, 1894. The progress which instrumental music has made in the worship within recent years in our city is the occasion on which they were delivered. It seemed opportune to present to the church the New Testament principle of acceptable worship, together with the facts showing the origin of instrumental music as thus used; and, by a wider dissemination of the facts, it is hoped to lead others to see the matter in its true light.

M. C. KURFEES.

*Louisville, Ky., December, 1894.*

## WALKING BY FAITH.

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### SERMON I.

(MORNING.)

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.” 2. Cor. v. 7.

Christianity is pre-eminently a religion of faith. Let us get this fact well and firmly fixed in our minds, for it will be seen that upon a proper understanding and appreciation of this vital principle, all acceptable service to God depends.

Many skeptics attempt to throw discredit upon the Bible because its religion is purely a religion of faith. They tell us we have never seen the joyous “summer land,” nor heard the enchanting music of angels in sweet vibrations “beyond the river,” but that it all rests on faith. But the same may be said of other things founded on faith whose credibility, in the estimation of skeptics, is not affected by this circumstance. The fact that in sowing and reaping, boarding a railway car for transportation, or carrying on commercial intercourse with each other, men can only *believe* success will crown their efforts as it has the efforts of others in the past, is never urged as a reason for not acting. On the contrary, it only shows that men act on the principle of faith, and that they act in proportion as the evidence is strong and convincing. Hence, as a matter of fact, it is not unreasonable to act where action rests exclusively on faith; and hence, the objection has no force against the Bible.

But, not only is Christianity, as a system, purely a system of faith (Gal. iii. 23), but, in order to its acceptableness, all service, which we render to God,



must be of faith. No proposition is more clearly established in the Word of God than this. Not only is it plainly declared that "we walk by faith," but in Heb. xi. 6, is the explicit statement that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Any act of religious worship, therefore, however great or small, must be of faith in order to please God. This does not mean that every act of man outside of religious service must be of faith. Man may follow his own wisdom or reason in the management of his own affairs, but in the service or worship of God, the only legitimate use of man's wisdom or reason is to acquiesce in whatever divine wisdom has revealed, and to thus "walk by faith." In the management of all affairs exclusively his own, man has the unquestionable right to follow his own judgment, provided he contravenes no principle of moral propriety or righteousness. In other words, beyond the regulation of man's conduct in all spheres of action by principles of moral integrity and righteous dealing, God has nowhere legislated for man, except in the service to be rendered exclusively to Him. In this sphere, however, God has legislated. He has ordained the worship to be rendered to Him, and human wisdom must neither add to, take from, nor in any way modify what He has prescribed, otherwise those who do so are walking by their own judgment, and not by faith. Hence, that we may see the principle on which all acceptable service to God must be rendered, let us now consider—

#### I. FAITH DEFINED IN DISTINCTION FROM OPINION.

Two questions properly answered will present this distinction in its true light.

1. *What is it to walk by faith?* In Rom. x. 17, Paul declares: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." This settles it as to how faith comes; it comes by hearing the Word of God. Accordingly, where there is no Word of God there can be no faith; and if no faith, then no walking by faith. This is not the opinion of any man or set of men; it is the unquestionable teaching of God's Word. Hence, if hearing the Word of God is the way faith comes, then where the Word of God is, there can be faith, but none beyond that. If, therefore, the Word of God says nothing concerning a given course, there can be no faith in pursuing that course, for FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD. And hence, since we are to "walk by faith," and "without faith it is impossible to please God," it follows that in any matter whatsoever in which we are not directed by the Word of God, we are neither walking by faith, nor pleasing God. This prepares us for the second question:

2. *What is it to walk by opinion?* In Jno. iii. 1, 2, we have the words: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; the same came to Jesus by night and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." But, you are ready to ask, what has such a passage to do with the question before us? Let us see. There are two questions in connection with this famous conversation to which I wish to call attention: (1) Did Nicodemus come to Jesus *by night*? The universal and

unanimous response from all believers in the Bible of every class and distinction is, that he did. But what is the cause of this perfect unity of sentiment? Simply because the Bible *says* he came by night, and there is always union where all follow what the Bible says. (2.) Why did he come *by night*, and not by day? It would be easy to find an answer to this question among the theologians. But the trouble with this class of wise men is, that to attempt to follow their guidance in such matters is like the attempt to ride two horses in opposite directions at the same time. One class of them tells us Nicodemus acted in this instance through fear of his colleagues in the Jewish Sanhedrim, choosing the curtain of night behind which to converse unobserved with the Great Teacher. Others tell us it was not through fear, but to avoid the crowds that gathered about Jesus during the day, the eminent ruler of the Jews preferring the stillness of the night that he might converse undisturbed with the Galilean Reformer. Now, one or the other of these views may be correct; but, as the Bible does not say one word about it, no mortal can know why he came by night. And this is precisely what is true of all the learned theologians. They only tell what they *think* about it; that is, they express their opinion. The word opinion signifies *what one thinks*, and in religious matters, it means what men think concerning matters on which the Bible is silent. The distinction, therefore, between faith and opinion is perfectly clear. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God; opinion is what men think where the Word of God does not speak. Hence, when men introduce as worship to

God, as service to be rendered to Him, things on which His Word is silent, they walk by opinion and not by faith. And now, that the essentiality of walking by faith in all religious matters, and never by opinion, may still more clearly appear, let us examine—

II. THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE LAID DOWN BY JESUS IN HIS DEFINITION OF VAIN WORSHIP.

This principle is found in Matt. xv. 9, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Here is a plain statement of two undeniable facts: 1. *These Scribes and Pharisees were worshipping God.* I am aware that what they were doing was condemned by Jesus, but it was worship, nevertheless, for Jesus himself so pronounced it. 2. *But it was vain worship, because they were doing, as religious service, things which God had not commanded.* Even the small matter of washing the hands was among the things severely condemned by Jesus; but is it wrong to wash hands? No, if it is done outside of religious service; but yes, emphatically yes, if it is done in religious service when there is no command of God for it. Here is a fact, then, that should be thoroughly and indelibly impressed upon every heart, that according to Jesus, an act, such as washing the hands, which is wholly sinless outside of religious service, is, nevertheless, sinful when performed in religious service in the absence of any command of God. Hence, although engaged in worshipping God, men may, at the same time, be under the condemnation of Jesus, because they are doing that which is ordered by man, and not by the Lord, which Jesus says is vain worship.

Much of the worship in the religious world of to-day is vain worship. We are now prepared to notice—

III. THE APPLICATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MAN.

First of all, the inspired Scriptures clearly set forth the fact that whenever and wherever persons attempted to do as service to God, either what He had forbidden or what He had not commanded, it was rejected. Through Samuel the prophet, the Lord issued a command to king Saul in the following words: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." 1. Sam. xv. The record informs us that Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah to Shur, but that he and the people took Agag the king alive, and spared the best of the sheep and oxen. That is, they followed their own wisdom in the matter. Further on, we will see why Saul did this, and that he has many successors and imitators to-day. When he and Samuel met, the disobedient king addressed Samuel thus: "Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord." Samuel replied: "What meaneth, then, the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Hoping to make amends for his wrong by offering a sacrifice, which had not been commanded, Saul replied: "The people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God," adding further on, "I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me; . . . but the

people took of the spoil to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal." The prophet of God replied: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice," showing that obedience consists in doing what is commanded, and that all service not commanded, though it be the sacrifice of the cattle upon a thousand hills, is vain worship. God's Word clearly reveals the fact that no kind of service which man may render to the Lord is acceptable, unless the Lord himself has ordered it. Gratuitous service is never acceptable to God. Seeing his great mistake, Saul now gives out the secret of his departure from the will of God in the following open confession: "I have sinned; I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and thy word; because I feared the people and obeyed their voice." There it is. Saul yielded to the will of the people instead of maintaining loyalty to the will of God. The same spirit is abroad today. To keep abreast of denominational fashions, the people clamor for departures from the will of God, while lax and latitudinarian leaders in the pulpit yield to the popular demand. Instead of leading the people along the pathway of loyalty to the Lord, they are themselves led by the people to copy after the denominations around them. One divine purpose in placing elders over a church is to guard against false teaching (Acts xx. 28-31; Tit. i. 7-11), but unfortunately in many instances, instead of maintaining a loyal stand by the Word of God, thus showing the young and uninstructed that it is wrong to follow the wisdom of men, the elders themselves yield to the imperious demand of the young people.

The schismatic and subversive scheme of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Num. xvi, is another illustration in point. God's order was that Aaron and his sons should burn incense, while the Levites, to whom Korah and his company belonged, had other duties assigned them. Becoming tired of God's order, they protested to Moses that he and Aaron were assuming too much authority, and that they had as much right to burn incense as Aaron and his sons. To carry out their scheme more effectively, they gathered together "two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown." Here were two hundred and fifty of the most prominent men among the people taking counsel against the Lord's order. Conventions and councils have been the hot-beds of heresy in all ages. The present instance was not an exception to the rule. Seeing they were determined to carry out their purposes, Moses told them to get ready with their censers, and then added: "Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind: if these men die the common death of all men, . . . then the Lord hath not sent me; but if . . . the earth open her mouth and swallow them up, . . . then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord." No sooner had Moses delivered this loyal speech, than the earth clave asunder and swallowed up Korah and all his company. The Lord had just spoken words of warning to Moses and Aaron, and through them to the congregation, saying, "Separate yourselves from among this congregation; . . . depart, I pray you, from the tents

of these wicked men, . . . lest ye be consumed in all their sins," thus teaching the solemn lesson that, when men deliberately depart from the will of God, we should separate ourselves from them. Through Paul, in Rom. xvi. 17, the New Testament enjoins the same duty: "I beseech you, brethren, mark them who are causing divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned, and turn away from them." This is the commandment of an inspired apostle of Christ.

Thus, we see there are but two ways, in general terms, to treat God's order—either obey it, or disobey it. Obedience consists in doing what God says, no more and no less. Disobedience consists in any departure from God's order, whether it be doing what He forbids, omitting all or a part that He commands, doing as religious service what He does not command, or in any modification of His will.

Let us now view this principle in the light of New Testament facts. According to the teaching of Jesus, the same principle holds good in the service of God to-day. It is still true that *whenever and wherever men do, as religious service, what they are not commanded to do, it is rejected*. But there is a broad distinction between doing a thing *as religious service*, and doing the same thing outside of religious service. As already observed at another point, an act wholly harmless in itself when done outside of religious service, may be very harmful when done in religious service. In the light of some specifications, the correctness of this principle will clearly appear.



1. *Washing the hands.* In this, there is nothing wrong in the mere act itself, as all can see, and yet it is one of the very acts which Jesus condemned in the strongest terms (Mark vii. 3, 7). But why did He condemn it? Look at the question from every possible point of view, and the only correct answer is, it was condemned because they were doing, as religious service, something which, although right itself, had not been commanded.

2. *Eating meat.* Is it wrong to eat meat? You answer, no. Then, suppose we place it on the Lord's table with the bread and wine? You are ready to say, that would not be right. Why not? You can neither say, it is because the act is wrong in itself, nor because it is forbidden; for we not only know it is not wrong to eat meat, but that God has nowhere said we must not eat it on His table. As in the former case, so here, there is only one correct answer, and that is, the wrong consists in the fact *that the Lord has not told us to do so.*

3. *Infant baptism.* Is it wrong to baptize infants? If so, why? Certainly not because it is wrong to apply water to infants, nor to dip them in water. It is true, God has commanded believer's baptism, but, notwithstanding this fact, it would still be right to practice both, as has been done, if God had commanded it. The practice is wrong, therefore, not because the act itself is sinful apart from religious service, but because there is no divine authority for the act in religious service.

4. *Instrumental music.* Is it wrong to play on musical instruments? Here again we must reply, there is nothing wrong in the act itself outside of

religious service. The opposition to instrumental music in the worship is misunderstood by many good people. They often say: "Instrumental music is so attractive and entertaining in its effect that we can not see why anyone should oppose it." If this were the criterion of judgment, the opposition would cease at once. Its use in the worship of God is not opposed on the ground that there is no taste for the music itself. The bewitching strains of the organ, piano, violin, etc., are equally as pleasing and attractive to many of the opponents as they are to any who advocate its use. Why, then, oppose it? Simply because God has not appointed it in His worship, but has appointed music of another kind. God has no more plainly said, eat bread on the Lord's table than He has said use vocal music in the worship. In Eph. v. 19, Paul says: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"; and in Col. iii. 16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God"; and Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn at the institution of the Lord's Supper, Matt. xxvi. 30. Hence, by both precept and example, vocal music is appointed in the worship of God. It is sometimes argued from Rev. v. 8, and xiv. 2, that there will be instrumental music in heaven; but what of it? There will be infant membership there, too; and the same passage speaks of "golden bowls of incense." If the Lord provides for infant membership and instrumental

music in heaven, it will be right for them to be there; but if He excludes both from the church on earth, we should do the same. God's will should be man's guide.

But it is claimed that the Lord has not forbidden instrumental music. Neither has He forbidden meat on the Lord's table, except by telling us to eat something else; and in the same way He has forbidden instrumental music by telling us to use another kind. If specifying what we are to eat on the Lord's table excludes everything else, then specifying what kind of music we are to use in worship, excludes every other kind. If not, why not? Here, then, are four distinct acts—*washing the hands, eating meat, dipping an infant in water, and playing on musical instruments*, all of which are sinless in themselves, but wrong when done as religious acts, because there is no divine authority for it. The worship of God was not appointed as an æsthetical performance to please and gratify man's taste, but to please and honor God by loyalty to His Word. We are to walk by faith.

## SERMON II.

(EVENING.)

“For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.” Jno. vi. 38.

In this passage, we have a clear and explicit statement that it was the supreme desire of Jesus to do His Father's will: “For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.” There is one recorded instance

(Luke xxii. 42) in which His will clashed with that of the Father, but even then He submissively bowed to the Father's will, uttering the famous words, "Not my will, but thine be done." Thus, He set the example for all men that they should seek to do, not their own will, but the will of the heavenly Father. Peter says: "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps." 1. Pet. ii. 21. Hence, in all matters of work and worship, those who respect the example of Jesus will not seek to have their own will carried out, but will be satisfied to follow the Father's will as expressed in His Word.

What, then, is the divine will in Christian worship? First of all, the worship of God prescribed in the New Testament is marked by great simplicity. It consisted in reading the Scriptures (Col. iv. 16; 1. Thess. v. 27; 1. Tim. iv. 13), Prayer (Acts iii. 1; 1. Thess. v. 17; 1. Tim. ii. 8), Exhortation (1. Tim. iv. 13; Heb. iii. 13), the Lord's Supper (Acts xx. 7; 1. Cor. xi. 17-34), Singing (Matt. xxvi. 30; Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16), and the Contribution to aid the poor and spread the Gospel (Acts ii. 42; 1. Cor. xvi. 1, 2). This is all very simple, but it is an expression of the divine will. Hence, a church of Christ could assemble on the Lord's day and engage by divine authority in reading the Scriptures, mutual exhortation (the exhorting was not all done by one man—1. Cor. xiv. 26-33.), singing God's praises, prayer and thanksgiving, partaking of the Lord's supper, and giving as God had prospered the worshippers.

This is the worship which God ordained; but,

in after ages, as history shows, man became tired of this simple worship, turned away from it, and arranged the worship according to his own wisdom and taste. Departures, however, from the original, simple worship were at first gradual. Even in the fourth century, as Mosheim informs us, it could still be said: "The Christian worship consisted in hymns, prayers, the reading of the Scriptures, a discourse addressed to the people, and concluded with the celebration of the Lord's Supper." *Mosheim*, Vol. I., p. 303. But in the second and third centuries, the seeds of a general perversion of God's order were sown, the "mystery of iniquity," which began to work in Paul's day (2. Thess. ii. 7), became more manifest, and the way was opened for the establishment of legislative councils in the church. Soon the arrogant claim was set up that the church through its councils had the authority to change and make laws for the regulation of religious affairs. Acting upon this bold assumption of authority, it only required time for the establishment by law of any measure which the caprice of religious leaders might demand. Accordingly, without attempting a detailed account of the many modifications of the divine order, we may here observe the plain fact of history that man, by his own assumption of authority, introduced infant baptism, sprinkling and pouring to be substituted for baptism, burning incense, auricular confession, and instrumental music. It is an unquestionable fact of history that all these things originated with man, and not with God. Man chose to follow his own will and to make the service of God, in large measure, an external show for the

entertainment of the people. Before the close of the fourth century, Mosheim informs us, "The public prayers had now lost much of that solemn and majestic simplicity, that characterized them in the primitive times, and which were, at present, degenerating into a vain and swelling bombast." *Vol. I.*, p. 304. During the same century, alluding to departures from the mutual exhortation taught in the New Testament, Fisher says: "The sermon in the fourth century became more rhetorical. Its brilliant thoughts or witty expressions were sometimes received with loud applause." *Church Hist.*, p. 120. And, to show the progress which will-worship had made by the sixteenth century, Mosheim says: "The public worship of the Deity was now no more than a pompous round of external ceremonies, the greatest part of which were insignificant and senseless, and much more adapted to dazzle the eyes than to touch the heart." *Vol. III.*, p. 22. Such is man's tendency to follow his own will instead of the will of God.

But, in the midst of the many perversions of the divine order, the special purpose now before us is to inquire into the origin of instrumental music in Christian worship. Did it originate with man, or with God? The only way to settle the question is to appeal to the facts in the case. The testimony is both clear and abundant; but, before introducing it, let us notice some important facts:

1. There is not a solitary instance of it in the worship of any church of the New Testament period.

2. Church historians, such as Eusebius, Neander Mosheim, Jones, Schaff, and Fisher, make no men-

tion of it for hundreds of years after Christ.

3. To-day, however, it is found in many places in Christian worship. When, and by whose authority, was it introduced? We now call upon eminent witnesses to testify in the case.

I. THE AMERICAN CYCLOPÆDIA:—"Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of Western Europe, about 670; but the earliest trustworthy account is that of the one sent as a present by the Greek emperor Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, king of the Franks, in 755." *Vol. 12, p. 688.*

II. CHAMBER'S ENCYCLOPÆDIA:—"The organ is said to have been first introduced into church music by Pope Vitalian I. in 666. In 757, a great organ was sent as a present to Pepin by the Byzantine emperor, Constantine Copronymus, and placed in the church of St. Corneille at Compiègne. Soon after Charlemagne's time organs became common." *Vol. 7, p. 112.*

III. ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA:—"Though the church from time to time appropriated the secular art-forms from their rise to their maturity, its chief authorities were always jealous of these advances, and issued edicts against them. So in 1322 Pope John xxii. denounced the encroachments of counterpoint, alleging that the voluptuous harmony of 3ds and 6ths was fit but for profane uses." *Vol. 17, p. 84, Art. Music.*

IV. SCHAFF-HERZOG ENCYCLOPÆDIA:—"In the Greek church the organ never came into use. But after the eighth century it became more and more common in the Latin church; not, however, without opposition from the side of the monks. \* \* \* The Reform Church discarded it; and though the church of Basel very early introduced it, it was in

other places admitted only sparingly and after long hesitation." *Vol. 2, p. 1702.*

V. FESSENDEN'S ENCYCLOPÆDIA:— "1. *Vocal music.* This species, which is the most natural, may be considered to have existed before any other. It was continued by the Jews and it is the only kind that is permitted in the Greek and Scotch churches or with few exceptions, in dissenting congregations in England. The Christian rule requires its use both for personal and social edification, Eph. v, Col. iii. The vocal music of the imperial choristers in St. Petersburg incomparably surpasses in sweetness and effect the sounds produced by the combined power of the most exquisite musical instruments. 2. *Instrumental music* is also of very ancient date, its invention being ascribed to Tubal, the sixth descendant from Cain. That instrumental music was not practiced by the primitive Christians, but was an aid to devotion of later times, is evident from church history." P. 852, *Art Music.*

VI. LONDON ENCYCLOPÆDIA:—"Pope Vitalianus in 658 introduced the organ into the Roman churches to accompany the singers. Leo II. in 682 reformed the singing of the psalms and hymns, accommodating the intonation of them to the manner in which they are sung or performed at the present day." *Vol. 15, p. 280, Art Music.*

The unanimity with which the learned authorities of this class testify, there being but slight variation as to exact dates, is worthy of note. But others, equally noted in their spheres, shall speak.

VII. THOMAS AQUINAS, surnamed the Angelic Doctor, one of the most learned scholastic doctors produced by the church of Rome in the thirteenth century, and a voluminous writer, says:



“Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize.” *Bingham's Ant.*, Vol. 3, p. 137.

VIII. ERASMUS (DESIDERIUS), a cotemporary of Martin Luther and the most renowned classical scholar of his age, who is represented by high authority as “the most gifted and industrious pioneer of modern scholarship,” says:

“We have brought into our churches a certain operose and theatrical music; such a confused, disorderly chattering of some words as I hardly think was ever heard in any of the Grecian or Roman theatres. The church rings with the noise of trumpets, pipes, and dulcimers; and human voices strive to bear their part with them. Men run to church as to a theatre, to have their ears tickled. And for this end organ makers are hired with great salaries, and a company of boys, who waste all their time in learning these whining tones.” *Com. on 1 Cor. xiv. 19.*

IX. JOHN CALVIN, the illustrious founder of the Presbyterian denomination, says:

“Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostles is far more pleasing to Him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints, only in a known tongue (1. Cor. xiv. 16) . . . What shall we then say of chanting, which fills the

ears with nothing but an empty sound?" *Com. on Psa. xxxiii.*

X. THEODORE BEZA, the great Genevan scholar and translator, who was a friend and coadjutor of Calvin, says:

"If the apostle justly prohibits the use of unknown tongues in the church, much less would he have tolerated these artificial musical performances which are addressed to the ear alone, and seldom strike the understanding even of the performers themselves." *Girardeau's Ins. Music*, p. 166.

XI. THE ENGLISH CONVOCATION, an ecclesiastical body in the church of England composed of bishops and clergy with Upper and Lower houses, is an important witness in the case:

"In the beginning of the year 1562," says Hetherington, "a meeting of the Convocation was held, in which the subject of further reformation was vigorously discussed on both sides. [Here is one alteration that was proposed.] That the use of organs be laid aside. When the vote came to be taken, on these propositions, forty-three voted for them and thirty-five against; but when the proxies were counted, the balance was turned, the final state of the vote being fifty-eight for and fifty-nine against. Thus, it was determined by a single vote, and that the proxy of an absent person who did not hear the reasoning that the Prayer-Book should remain unimproved, that there should be no further reformation, that there should be no relief granted to those whose consciences felt aggrieved by the admixture of human inventions in the worship of God." *Hetherington's Hist. Westmin. Asscm. of Divines*, p. 30.

Thus, the church of England was at one time on

the verge of excluding instrumental music from the worship, the practice being retained by a single vote.

According to Dr. Lightfoot, President of the Westminster Assembly of Divines from 1643 to 1649, sprinkling and pouring for baptism were voted on in precisely the same way, the practice in this instance also being retained by a single vote. This is a remarkable coincidence in the history of these two Romish relics.

XII. JOSEPH BINGHAM, the well known author of "*Antiquities of the Christian Church*" and said to be one of the most learned men the Church of England has ever produced, says :

"Music in churches is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music not so." *Works, Vol. 3, p. 137.*

XIII. LYMAN COLEMAN, an accurate scholar and Presbyterian author, says :

"The tendency of this [instrumental music] was to secularize the music of the church, and to encourage singing by a choir. Such musical accompaniments were gradually introduced; but they can hardly be assigned to a period earlier than the fifth and sixth centuries. Organs were unknown in church until the eighth or ninth century. Previous to this they had their place in the theatre, rather than in the church. They were never regarded with favor in the Eastern church, and were vehemently opposed in many places in the West." *Primitive Church, pp. 376, 377.*

XIV. CONYBEARE AND HOWSON, two scholars of high repute in the Church of England, commenting on Eph. v. 19, say :

"Let your songs be, not the drinking songs of

heathen feasts, but psalms and hymns; and their accompaniment, not the music of the lyre, but the melody of the heart." *Life and Epis. of Paul*, Vol. 2, p. 408.

XV. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, commenting on the use of instrumental music in Christian worship, says:

"That all persons who have no spiritual discernment, taste or relish for spiritual meditations, consolations and sympathies of renewed hearts, should call for such aid is but natural. Pure water from the flinty rock has no attraction for the mere toper or wine-bibber. A little alcohol, or genuine Cognac brandy, or good old Madeira is essential to the beverage to make it truly refreshing. So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I think that instrumental music would be not only a desideratum, but an essential pre-requisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume to all spiritually minded Christians, such aids would be as a cow-bell in a concert." *Mill. Har., Series iv., Vol. 1*, p. 581, in *Mem. of A. Campbell*, p. 366.

XVI. PROF. JOHN GIRARDEAU, a Presbyterian and Professor in Columbia Theological Seminary, says:

"The church, although lapsing more and more into defection from the truth and into a corruption of apostolic practice, had no instrumental music for 1200 years [that is, it was not in general use before this time]; . . . the Calvinistic Reformed Church ejected it from its services as an element of Popery, even the Church of England having come very nigh to its extrusion from her worship. . . . It is heresy in the sphere of worship." *Instrumental Music*, p. 179.

This list of witnesses might be extended, but the number introduced is sufficient to place the question of the origin of instrumental music in Christian worship beyond all doubt. But, along with these sixteen independent and reliable authorities, some of them world-renowned, I introduce one more witness as weightier than all the others combined. This witness comes in the person of CHRIST AND HIS INSPIRED APOSTLES; and their testimony is found in the unanswerable fact that, notwithstanding instrumental music was used in the Jewish worship on up to their time, yet they deliberately set it aside and left it out of Christian worship. In this fact there is an undeniable expression of the will of God; and this of itself ought to settle the question. But, in addition to this significant fact, we now have the unanimous testimony of a half dozen encyclopædias and of leading scholars in different ages, all testifying to the historic fact that instrumental music in Christian worship originated with man, and not with God. If it is possible to settle any question by an appeal to facts, then this one is unquestionably settled.

#### OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

The following objections are sometimes urged:

1. That there is no specific command for carpets, pews, pulpits, baptisteries, chandeliers, and such like, and if it is not wrong to have these things, neither is it wrong to have instrumental music. But, the fact that these things are not named in the Bible is certainly no proof that something else not named therein is allowable; and, since some things

not specifically named are, nevertheless, necessarily implied, it does not follow that because one thing not so named is allowable, therefore, another is. Be it distinctly understood, however, that if these things, like instrumental music, were a part of the worship, as we shall see further on that the latter is, it would be equally wrong to have them. It is wrong to do any thing as worship to God which He does not command. But the cases are by no means parallel. The act performed in a baptistery is an act which God commands; but the act performed in playing on a musical instrument is an act which God does not command. Moreover, the act of baptism performed in a baptistery is the same act whether performed in a baptistery, a river, a lake, or a pond; but the act performed on a musical instrument is not the same act which is performed in singing, and which God commands. Singing and playing are two distinct acts; each can exist without the other, and God commands the one, but not the other. Those who play on musical instruments in Christian worship are, therefore, doing what God has nowhere commanded them to do. But, whether we baptize in a baptistery, preach the Word in a pulpit, listen to it while sitting in a pew with or without as "many lights" burning as when Paul preached in Troas (Acts xx. 8), or sing God's praises while the feet rest on a carpeted or carpetless floor, we are in each case performing the act which God commands; but, in playing on a musical instrument we are not performing an act which God commands. In other words, we can not baptize in a baptistery, preach the Word in a pulpit,

listen to it in a pew, or sing God's praises in a house with or without a carpet or lights, without doing in each case what God commands; but we can play on a musical instrument without doing any thing which God commands. If it be said we can not sing psalms accompanied by a musical instrument without doing what God commands, I reply, this would not only be doing what God commands, but more than He commands; and if it be further claimed that in singing psalms accompanied by an instrument we are no more doing more than is commanded than when we preach in a pulpit, I reply that the cases are not parallel for the reason that the pulpit or its equivalent—a place to occupy while preaching—is necessarily implied in the command to preach, since this command can not be obeyed without being obeyed *in some place*; but neither a musical instrument nor its equivalent is implied in the command to sing, since this command can be obeyed without playing on an instrument or doing anything equivalent to it. Place is a necessary incidental in obeying the commands to preach, hear preaching, baptize, and sing; but instrumental music is not a necessary incidental in obeying the command to sing. It is another kind of music which may or may not accompany vocal music. In preaching, we are not compelled to have a pulpit, but we are compelled to have its equivalent—a place to occupy; in hearing preaching we are not compelled to have pews, but we are compelled to have their equivalent—a place to occupy; we are not compelled to have a carpeted floor, but we are compelled to have some kind of a floor wherever

we worship, and no kind is specified either with or without a carpet; we are not compelled to have a baptistery, but we are compelled to have its equivalent—a place in which to baptize. Such things are not explicitly, but implicitly, commanded. The only reason, therefore, that these things or their equivalents are contended for is because they are necessarily implied in what is commanded, and we are compelled to have them; but instrumental music is not implied in the command to sing, and we are neither compelled to have it nor anything equivalent to it. The attempt to classify these things together is, therefore, a pitiable subterfuge.

2. It is objected that musical instruments are on a par with tuning forks, note-books, and hymn-books, and that they all stand or fall together. Here again the cases are not parallel as is clearly shown by an examination of the office filled by each. For instance, the tuning-fork stops before the singing or act of worship begins. If an organ were only used to pitch the tune, there would be nothing wrong in its use, because we are commanded to sing, and we can not sing without pitch. Whatever is essential to doing a command is involved in the command, but pitching the tune is essential to doing the command to sing; therefore, pitching the tune is involved in the command to sing. No difference whether it be pitched with the voice, a tuning-fork, a pitch-pipe, or any other way, the thing that is done, viz., *pitching the tune*, is involved in the command to sing. Moreover, when a tuning fork is used to pitch the tune, nothing is done in singing that is not done without it, pitching the tune being



the only thing done with the tuning-fork, which is done in singing without the fork, for it is impossible to sing without pitching the tune. But when a musical instrument is used with the singing, something is done that is not done without it, viz., another kind of music is made simultaneously with that made by the human voice, It is praising God with two kinds of music where God himself has chosen and appointed only one kind.

The same principle applies to the use of note-books. In using notes, no act is performed that is not performed without them, and nothing accompanies the singing that does not also accompany it without them; but in using musical instruments, an act is performed that is not performed without them, and something does accompany the singing, viz., instrumental music, which does not accompany it without them. By no sort of reasoning can it be shown that playing on an instrument and singing are so related that singing involves playing, or its equivalent; but it can be shown that musical notes and singing are so related that singing involves either the notes or their equivalent. This is seen in the following reasoning: We are commanded to sing; but we can not sing without a tune; therefore, the tune is involved in the command to sing. Again: a tune can not be sung without length and pitch of tones are indicated; but notes, or their equivalent, are essential to indicating length and pitch of tones; therefore, notes or their equivalent are essential to singing a tune. If it be said that many persons sing who do not know the notes, it is sufficient to reply that they learned the tune either

directly or indirectly from some one who got it from the notes. The principle is the same whether the tune be learned directly or remotely from the notes. A tune can not exist without notes or their equivalent. The notes simply indicate length and pitch of tone which are essential to either vocal or instrumental music. If it be objected that the instrument gives the tune to the ear just as the notes do to the eye, I reply, this is a mistake. The instrument has to get the tune from the notes just as does the leader of the singing. This is an artful sophism, founded on an egregious blunder. *The tune exists before it is played on the instrument.* But, it may be asked, if a tune were improvised on an instrument, would not that be a case of the ear getting the tune from the instrument? By no means. Though a multitude of ears might hear it, it could only be an instrumental solo, no one knowing the tune but the performer, from whose soul comes the tune, and not from the instrument. If it could be said of musical instruments as it can be of musical notes, that their use results in nothing but singing, there would be nothing wrong in using them, for we are commanded to sing; but their use produces another kind of music which we are not only not commanded to have, but which the Lord excluded from Christian worship. That the two cases are not parallel, those who will open their eyes to the facts can plainly see.

As to hymn-books, we are commanded to sing hymns, and the hymn-book is simply the hymns, just as your bound-Bible is the Word of God. Hymns are none the less hymns whether they are

in manuscript or in a printed volume, just as the Word of God is none the less the Word of God whether it is in manuscript or in a printed volume. In each case, you have what God commands.

3. It is further objected that instrumental music, like some of the things just mentioned, is only an aid to and not a part of the worship. But God's Word plainly and forever settles this point. However, let us first inquire, What is done with the instruments in worship to-day that was not done with them in the Jewish worship? Nothing whatever. They enter into the worship to-day just as they did then, and are used with other parts of the worship just as they were then. Now let us hear the decision of God's Word in the case. Under the old dispensation where instruments were used, we have the following: "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also, and the trumpets, together with the instruments of David, king of Israel; and all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished." 2. Chron. xxix. 27, 28. Thus, some were offering the sacrifice, others were singing, and others were sounding the instruments of music; but God through the inspired record says *they were all worshipping*. What shall we say? Under the same dispensation, David said: "Upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God." Psa. xliii. 4; and among the closing words of the book of Psalms, we have the following: "Praise him with the sound of the trumpet; praise him with the psaltery and harp; praise him with stringed instruments and the

pipe." Psa. cl. 3, 4. Thus, God's Word simply declares that when instrumental music is used in the worship, it is a part of that worship, and no cunning sophism can conceal the fact. Moreover, according to the teaching of Jesus, it is vain worship to-day, because it is not commanded by the Lord. Those who introduce it with other human devices into the worship of God claim to be advanced thinkers, and that the progressive age in which we are living makes it necessary to be thus "progressive" in religious worship. This would all do, if God had left the worship to be variously arranged according to the pleasure of man in different ages; but this He has not done. On the contrary, God has not only arranged the worship Himself for His people in every age, stating explicitly what they shall do in that worship, but He has also plainly said: "Who-soever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God," 2. Jno. 9, Rev. Vers. Thus, while progression is right within the limits of God's Word, it is wrong to "go onward" beyond that Word; and Paul specifically declares that what he wrote concerning divisions in the church at Corinth, was that Christians "might learn not to go beyond the things which are written." 1. Cor. iv. 6, Rev. Vers. Let us abide by this decision.

Thus, by an array of historic facts and scholarly testimony from various sources, we have now seen that instrumental music in Christian worship is a human device introduced hundreds of years after Christ; that, although it was tolerated in the Jewish worship, it was excluded from Christian worship by Christ and inspired apostles; that it is one of the

many relics of Rome adopted by the Romish hierarchy in the absence of any authority from the New Testament; that its introduction was to gratify the desire for pleasure and entertainment; and that the practice was vehemently opposed by pious and learned men, and did not become general till after the thirteenth century. And yet, in the face of such overwhelming and irresistible testimony, we are not only confronted with the sad spectacle of churches introducing this practice when they know it is an obstacle in the way of union; but, those who decline to follow this and similar departures from the Word of God, choosing to render simply the worship prescribed in the New Testament, are often denounced in unbrotherly terms by advocates of this innovation. May God help them to see their mistake.

Finally, one thing is incontrovertibly settled: those who adopt this practice are, to that extent, guided by the wisdom of man, and not by the wisdom of God; and they thus openly violate the plain and positive requirement of the Lord that His followers shall walk by faith.